UNITED NATIONS

DP

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1994/SR.7
8 March 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE BOARD

First regular session of 1994

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 18 February 1994, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. ANSARI (India)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

PRESENTATION BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON THE THEME: "BUILDING A NEW UNDP: AGENDA FOR CHANGE" (continued)

1. Mr. SPETH (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme) expressed his appreciation to members of the Executive Board for their contribution to the success of the session. The Bureau had performed its job skilfully and the Board appeared to be working through its agenda according to schedule. He looked forward to participating with resident representatives at the May meeting in a discussion of substantive issues.

2. Many members had spoken of a new spirit prevailing in UNDP; he intended to build upon that spirit to create a sense of commitment to follow up on recent reforms and, to that end, would be providing the Board with detailed information on progress in the implementation of reform measures. He thanked members for their comments on specific measures and said he would take them into consideration as he went about the task of implementation. Lastly, he said it had been heartening to hear so many intelligent and substantive questions and responses to his presentation and he believed the Executive Board and UNDP were off to a very good start.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (continued)

3. The PRESIDENT recalled that, at the first meeting of the current session, he had drawn attention to General Assembly resolution 48/222 B of 23 December 1993, paragraph 3 of which encouraged all bodies currently entitled to written meeting records to review the need for such records and to communicate their recommendations to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

4. He understood that, during the course of formal and informal discussions on the organization of work of the Executive Board, a consensus had emerged to replace summary records of meetings during the regular session with a report prepared by the secretariat. While on the one hand, it might be prudent to postpone any decision on summary records until a later meeting, so that the Board would have an opportunity to try out the new procedure, it had been suggested that a decision on the matter should be taken before the end of the current session.

5. Mr. EIDHAMMER (Norway) wished to know whether the reports in question would be circulated only to members of the Board.

6. Mr. ABIBI (Congo) requested clarification regarding the languages in which the reports would be circulated.

7. Mr. MICHEL (France) asked whether regular reports would be approved at the annual session of the Board.

8. Mr. ROHNER (Observer for Switzerland) asked whether members of the Board would be receiving a report covering the current session.

9. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Executive Board) said reports would be available to all members of the Board and to observers; they would be translated into all the working languages and would be approved at the session immediately following the session covered by the report. Summary records would be issued for the current session, since the Board had not yet decided otherwise.

10. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Executive Board wished to approve the proposal to replace the summary records for regular sessions of the Board with a report prepared by the secretariat, which would also contain the decisions taken by the Board and which would be circulated to members a few weeks after the session and would be approved at a subsequent meeting of the Board.

11. It was so decided.

12. The PRESIDENT recalled that the Board had approved a timetable for its sessions in 1994 with the exception of the autumn session, which, it had been suggested, should tentatively be scheduled for 5 to 7 October. It had come to his attention that those dates might coincide with the meeting of the Group of 77 which was normally held at that time. Following a discussion with the Chairman of the Group of 77 concerning the timing of the meeting, it remained uncertain whether the meeting of the Group of 77 would conclude on Tuesday, 4 October, or Wednesday, 5 October. In view of the uncertainty relating to the dates, he suggested that the Board should postpone its final decision on the matter until its next meeting.

13. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Executive Board) said he would try to arrange for conference services for 6, 7 and 10 October.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and reconvened at 12.05 p.m.

HIV AND DEVELOPMENT NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS (continued) (DP/1994/L.1; DP/1994/5)

14. Ms. JACOBSEN (Norway), Vice-President, said that, reporting on the informal consultations on the item, a disagreement had emerged regarding the proposed decision to endorse a request for 22 new posts for HIV and Development National Professional Officers. However, consultations were continuing and she had requested Ms. Volkoff (Canada) to prepare a draft decision for the Board's consideration.

15. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) proposed for the Board's consideration the following draft decision relating to the appointment of HIV and Development National Professional Officers:

> "The Executive Board authorizes UNDP to continue its recruitment effort for the 22 HIV/AIDS positions, pending final approval of these 22 positions at its regular session in May. No contracts made for these positions may be signed before final approval is granted.

(Ms. Volkoff, Canada)

"The Executive Board's final decision should be based on firm assurances that any UNDP activity now and in the future will be integrated fully, with complementarity to and non-duplicative of existing multi-bi activities in this field and fully compatible with any joint co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS.

"The Executive Board will work towards the recommendation of the joint co-sponsored programme to ECOSOC no later than July 1994."

16. Ms. RIBEIRO-VANDERAUWERA (Belgium) said that the HIV/AIDS epidemic was making ever greater demands on the resources of the international community, even as the total amount of those resources was declining; therefore, every effort should be made to derive maximum value from contributions. However, in view of the overriding human need for the services of the 22 national professional officers, she believed that the proposal should be adopted by consensus.

17. Mr. JALLOW (Gambia) said that his delegation saw no need for the Executive Board to approve the signing of contracts. UNDP had already been given authorization to begin the recruitment process. It should therefore be able to proceed to appoint the candidates selected.

18. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the National Professional Officers programme represented the first opportunity for UNDP to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/199 in the area of HIV/AIDS. The report of the Administrator (DP/1994/5) stated that, pending the formulation of a joint strategy, UNDP would assist countries by providing staff support for the resident representatives. The national professional officers would report to the resident representatives/coordinators, which should meet any concerns regarding coordination.

19. Coordination was an intangible and subjective objective and it could take some time before it was achieved in practice. The crisis was extremely urgent, however, and immediate action was needed. The Executive Board had already approved the programme in principle, and waiting until the May session for its final approval would mean unnecessary delay.

20. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) said that she understood the concerns about bureaucratic obstacles to the implementation of the programme, and her proposal did not request formal agreement on a joint project. It would be useful, however, to verify with the AIDS Task Force at its forthcoming meeting that the 22 posts in question were part of a larger strategy.

21. Mr. MONROE (United States of America) said that the Canadian proposal struck a balance between the need to move forward on the matter and the need for a coordinated approach. Therefore, while the proposed approach did not meet the expectations raised the previous June, it could be accepted as a compromise.

22. Mr. BABA (Observer for Uganda) said that the posts had been approved in principle at the June 1993 meeting of the Governing Council. Given the urgency of the situation, he appealed to the Executive Board to authorize UNDP to continue its recruitment efforts, pending the early establishment of a joint cooperation programme.

23. Ms. NOTEBOOM (Observer for the Netherlands) said that her delegation had difficulty with the proviso "pending final approval" in paragraph 1 of the proposed text, since approval had already been given. She wondered who would provide the "firm assurances" requested in paragraph 2.

24. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) inquired what efforts could be made in the period before contracts were signed to indicate that some progress was being made, and wondered if more time was needed for recruitment.

25. Mr. EIDHAMMER (Norway) said that his delegation regretted that the Board could not be more decisive. Paragraph 3 of the proposal was somewhat ambiguous with regard to the kind of decision the Board was requested to take, since it was not yet ready to discuss the joint programme on HIV/AIDS.

26. Mr. JALLOW (Gambia) asked how much time would be necessary to recruit and deploy the national professional officers in question.

27. Ms. REID (Director, HIV and Development Programme) said that, on the basis of the approval in principle that had been given, the field offices had been notified and many had already identified candidates whom they were ready to recruit. Any delay might result in the loss of excellent candidates. Training for the national professional officers had also been scheduled within the context of ongoing training activities, as there were no resources in the budget for specialized training courses.

28. Mr. JALLOW (Gambia) suggested that the Executive Board might approve the implementation of the programme for the establishment of the HIV and Development National Professional Officers at the country level within the context of the unified, coordinated and collaborative United Nations response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the country level and request the UNDP Administration to ensure non-duplication of existing HIV/AIDS activities being carried out by other United Nations agencies.

29. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the information provided by the Director confirmed that only a decision along the lines proposed by the representative of the Gambia would make sense.

30. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that, as many other speakers had noted, the main problem lay in achieving coordination among the various United Nations agencies involved with HIV/AIDS. While the problem of AIDS was very urgent, it was important to utilize the limited resources in an effective way.

31. Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that it was clear that there was no consensus about either of the compromise proposals put forward. He recalled that UNDP had significantly reduced its administrative budget for the current biennium and had cut a number of international posts; the trade-off had been an increase in the number of national officer posts, half of which were to focus on sustainable development, and the other half, on HIV and development. It should be noted that the original intention had been to increase UNDP's field capacity in general, not just in the areas of sustainable development and HIV/AIDS; the Board had a responsibility to the UNDP field structure. He suggested that the item should be taken up at the May session and that UNDP should be requested not to enter into any binding agreements before them.

32. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the second proposal made by the representative of the United Kingdom was unnecessary; the Board needed to take a decision to move forward. If there was no consensus the Board would have to be guided by Governing Council decision 1993/35.

33. Mr. BABA (Observer for Uganda) said that if the Board waited until the May session, it would still be in the same situation. There was clearly a need for the national officer posts. The AIDS pandemic was raging and action must be taken.

34. Mr. MONROE (United States of America) said that it was regrettable that the Board had been unable to arrive at a compromise solution. The Canadian proposal would have moved the Board forward towards a coordinated global effort. The Board was missing an opportunity to advance the concept of coordination and cohesion and optimize the resources that were available to confront the pandemic; at the very least, it should decide to take up the matter at its May session.

35. Mr. PEDERSEN (Denmark) said that it was regrettable that the Board was not able to move forward; the only option was to be guided by Governing Council decision 1993/35.

36. Ms. NOTEBOOM (Observer for the Netherlands) said that her Government felt that the best approach to combating AIDS was a joint programme. Clarification was needed on how the national officers would be integrated within the jointly sponsored programme.

37. Mr. DIECKERT (Germany) said that his delegation could support the Canadian proposal as a compromise. The Board could not continue to postpone taking a decision. He shared the concern of many speakers about the lack of coordination within the United Nations; UNDP should be requested to report back on the progress achieved in the coordination process.

38. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) said that all that needed to be done was to implement Governing Council decision 1993/35. It would be irresponsible to defer action; the AIDS pandemic could not be ignored. If the Board had difficulty in approving 22 posts, it could perhaps approve half the posts. At the May session, it could then decide whether the rest were required, and, if so, in which countries they should be deployed. The Board had to give a very

(Miss Janjua, Pakistan)

clear signal to the United Nations system that it must come together on the issue of AIDS. The WHO/Global Programme on AIDS would not be affected by the appointment of the national officers.

39. Mr. CLAVIJO (Observer for Colombia) said that there seemed to be consensus that the Board's original mandate needed to be reaffirmed and that more time was needed to seek a response to some concerns.

40. He suggested that the Board should take a decision in which it reaffirmed Governing Council decision 1993/35, decided to take action, at its regular session in May 1994, on the issue of HIV and Development National Professional Officers, and requested the Administrator to respond at that time to the concerns raised by delegations on the matter and to continue the relevant administrative preparations for its implementation.

41. Mr. MONROE (United States of America) said that the Colombian proposal was not acceptable.

42. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Board should continue its consideration of the matter at its next meeting.

43. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.